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Ram Lalla placed inside sanctum sanctorum

The idol of Ram Lalla as a 5-year-old was placed on a lotus-shaped, gold-plated throne in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple in Ayodhya. For now, Ram Lalla is wrapped up in cloth. The full idol can be seen only after the consecration ceremony. Work on a makeshift shikhar (peak) over the sanctum santorum is nearing completion. The construction company has been directed to ensure that the garbh griha shikhar is built at the earliest | **P9, P10**

Scan for more information

Hamara Sankalp
Viksit Bharat

Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

Digital India strengthening the economy

India accounts for **46%** of global digital payments

EXPRESS INTAKE

HC orders status quo on Karanth Layout | P2

Traffic restrictions in Devanahalli for PM's visit | P2

Release 2.5 tmcft Cauvery water: CWRC to K'taka | P5

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE
INDULGE
42 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

TIT-FOR-TAT PAK AIRSTRIKES WITHIN IRAN

Pak claims it hit Baloch terrorists across the border; worry over more regional instability

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

IN a tit-for-tat attack, Pakistan on Thursday bombed terror hideouts within Iran on the Balochistan border, killing at least nine persons, including four children, further inflaming bilateral relations.

The strikes came a couple of days after Iranian missiles and drones hit two bases of Baloch terror outfit Jaish al-Adil in the Panjgur town of Pakistan's Balochistan province. "We only targeted Iranian terrorists on the soil of Pakistan," Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had claimed on Wednesday at Davos. A furious Tehran summoned Islamabad's charge d'affaires to register its protest and demand an explanation. All nine deaths were of foreign nationals, Iran's interior minister Ahmad Vahidi said.

Pakistan claimed its precision military strikes at dawn took out hideouts used by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) within Iran's Sistan-o-Baluchistan province. Codenamed Marg Bar Sarmachar, (Death to guerrillas), the strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons. Pakistan Air Force fighter jets used stand-off extended range munitions to bombard seven targets while the planes remaining inside Pakistani airspace.

"Over the last several years, in our engagements with Iran, Pakistan has consistently shared its serious concerns about the safe havens and sanctuaries enjoyed by Pakistani origin terrorists calling themselves Sarmachars on the ungoverned spaces inside Iran. Pakistan also shared multiple dossiers with concrete evidence of the presence and activities of these terrorists," Pakistan's foreign ministry said.

Recent Iranian strikes in Syria, Iraq and Pakistan in response to terrorist attacks on its territory and Thursday's counter-attack, heightened international concerns about regional stability. China, Russia, Turkey and the European Union asked both Iran and Pakistan to exercise restraint and avoid any further escalation of the crisis. **P12**

INDIA STAYS MUM

The Indian foreign office chose not to comment on retaliatory Pakistani strikes. A day earlier, India supported Iran's missile attacks on terror bases in Pakistan, saying it understands actions countries take in self-defence

Indian Navy saves drone-hit vessel

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE Indian Navy responded to a distress call from a merchant vessel in the Gulf of Aden following a drone attack on Wednesday night.

There were no casualties on board the vessel with 22 crew (nine Indians included) and fire was brought under control. The vessel is proceeding to its next port of call.

"INS Visakhapatnam, mission deployed in Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy operations, swiftly responded to a distress call by Marshall Island flagged MV Genco Picardy following a drone attack at 23.11 hrs on 17 Jan 24," the Indian Navy said in a statement on Thursday.

A large percentage of India's trade, including oil and fertilisers, passes through the Gulf of Aden, which has now become a chokepoint. Lots of foreign vessels have Indians as crew.

12 kids among 14 drown as boat flips in Gujarat

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

A school picnic turned tragic as 12 students and two teachers drowned after their boat capsized in Harni lake on the outskirts of Vadodara in Gujarat on Thursday evening. Officials said 27 people were on board when the mishap occured. However, locals claimed the boat was carrying 31 people, including 23 kids, against the capacity of 14 adults, and that only 11 were given life jackets.

"Twelve students and two teachers died in the boat capsizing incident. A total of 18 students and two teachers were rescued," Gujarat home minister Harsh Sanghavi said, correcting an earlier update given by officials that 14 students had drowned.

The students and teachers were from New Sunrise School, Vadodara and were on a picnic organised by the school. According to sources, the students were aged 7-8 years and left in two boats — English medium students in one boat and Gujarati medium students in the next. Only the latter returned safely. The boats were operated by a private contractor with licence from the Vadodara Municipal Corporation.

"We had no idea about what happened there. We left with our boys from the Gujarati medium. When the others did not return, we inquired why they were taking so much time. Then we discovered the boat capsized," said a teacher.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured.

Rescue workers during the search operation at Harni lake in Vadodara | PTI

Basavanna now 'cultural leader of Karnataka'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal to declare 12th century saint poet and philosopher Basavanna as the "cultural leader of Karnataka" on the lines of Maharashtra's Chatrapati Shivaji. According to political analysts, this decision is an attempt to woo the dominant Lingayat community in the state ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

Thanking the cabinet for approving the proposal, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said, "Basavanna worked towards establishing a casteless society and his Vachanas are still relevant. The 'Anubhava Mantapa' established by him is regarded as the first religious parliament of the world. There was a demand from all communities and religious heads to recognise his contributions. **P4**

STATE BUDGET ON FEB 16

Setting a record of sorts, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will present his 15th budget as finance minister on February 16. The cabinet meeting on Thursday also decided that the joint session of the legislature will start from February 12 to 23 | **P4**

Puthige mutt pontiff ascends Paryaya Peeta

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

SRI Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji of Sri Puthige Mutt, who is on a mission to publicise Sri Madhwacharya's Dvaita philosophy across the globe, ascended the Paryaya Peeta here on Thursday morning.

Sri Vishwapriya Theertha Swamiji of Sri Admar Mutt handed over the Akshaya Patra and the keys to Sri Krishna Mutt to manage the 800-year-old mutt for two years. This marked the symbolic transfer of administration of Sri Krishna Mutt from Sri Krishnapura Mutt to Sri Puthige Mutt. Nearly two lakh devotees participated in the two-day Paryaya mahotsav.

Outgoing seer Sri Vidyasagara Theertha Swamiji of Sri Krishnapura Mutt does not approve of Sri Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji's right to ascend the Paryaya Peeta as he had committed "Seemollanghana" (crossing the ocean) when he went abroad. **P4**

Social Welfare Department
Entrepreneurship Training Programme for
Scheduled Castes Women Graduates
Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Shri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
The Department of Social Welfare is organizing Entrepreneurship Training for 50 Scheduled Caste Women Graduates to set up enterprises. The Entrepreneurship Training will be provided through the prestigious IIM-Bangalore and applications are invited online through official website: www.sw.kar.nic.in of the department.
Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Hon'ble Minister of Social Welfare addressing a meeting
General Eligibility
Candidates should be SC Women Graduate from Karnataka State.
Only those Candidates intending to set up businesses/ enterprises should apply.
Age Limit : Minimum 21 Years, Maximum 45 Years.
Training duration is 5 to 6 months.
8 days training will be given at IIM-Bangalore Campus and through MOOC (Massive Open Online Course).
100% attendance is mandatory.
Candidates will be selected through a screening test conducted by IIM-Bangalore.
Screening test will be held on 11.02.2024 at IIM-Bangalore Campus.
Candidates can submit online application (www.sw.kar.nic.in) along with necessary documents from Date: 17.01.2024 to Date: 31.01.2024 by 5 PM.
Online application is available on official website www.sw.kar.nic.in of the Social Welfare Department
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Commissioner,
Social Welfare Department

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